



**CONSUMER  
& INDUSTRY  
SERVICES**

*"Serving Michigan...  
Serving You"*

# e-DISCUSSIONS

VOLUME 29 - January/February 2003

## *From the Director*

*by David C. Hollister*

On Tuesday, January 28th I resigned as Mayor of the City of Lansing to become Director of the Michigan Department of Consumer & Industry Services.

For many of you, I am a familiar face - but those of you I haven't already met I thought this would be the perfect opportunity to introduce myself. Like you, I've dedicated my life as a public servant from public school teacher, county commissioner, state representative, to most recently mayor.

I loved my role as Mayor, however Governor Jennifer Granholm is very persuasive and convinced me that she would like me do on the statewide level what we've been so successful in doing for the City of Lansing. The City of Lansing is a far different city than when I came into office in January 1994, with a more diversified and vibrant economy, safer neighborhoods, stronger infrastructure and improved schools and quality of life. I am proud to say during my administration that there were more than \$2.9 billion in investments and a commitment by General Motors to consolidate operations and build two new state-of-the-art assembly plants in Lansing

I am thankful to have received the bipartisan support of the state Senate, which voted unanimously in January in support of my confirmation as your department director. Their vote of confidence only emphasizes that we are working as one team in state government to encourage investment, build partnerships and grow the entire state. This will mean that CIS will be joining the Department of Career Development and working more closely with MSHDA, Broadband Authority, and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. By working under one umbrella in a yet-to-be named state department we will best be able to address labor, economic growth, and urban development issues. As we rethink how best to achieve our mission, I will welcome your ideas and suggestions. One thing is clear; we will be asked to do more, with fewer resources, and we will all need to be creative and resilient.

I also wish to say "thank you" to Dennis Sykes for doing a great job serving as acting director until I was able to come on board. Fortunately, Dennis will continue to serve as a leader for our department as a deputy director. Another key player joining our team is Carolyn Hutting, who is my personal assistant, and a person I am sure you will get to know on a first-name basis as "Sparky" in the future.

I know I speak on behalf of Dennis and Sparky when I say that we appreciate how welcome everyone at CIS has already made us feel. The transition to a new administration is never easy, but I can tell you how much I appreciate making it proceed as smooth as possible. I will be sure to keep everyone posted on department developments in future newsletters. Sincerely,



**David C. Hollister**

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### Records Management Functions Transferred to HAL Department

The state government records management program, including the state records center, was recently transferred from the Department of Management and Budget to the Department of History, Arts and Libraries (HAL) in an effort to advance the delivery of records and information services to Michigan residents and state agencies.

Executive Order 2002-17, effective as of December 22, 2002, further consolidates records management functions under one department, to "promote a unified approach to and strengthen central policymaking and direction-setting" in records management and preservation. HAL has had responsibility for the State Archives of Michigan and the local government records management program since its formation in October 2001.

All records management and archives functions will be placed within the Michigan Historical Center, the agency responsible for historical resources and records within HAL.

HAL Director Dr. William M. Anderson said, "This reorganization will enable more efficient administration of records programs and services."

While both the state records management program and the state archives programs have effectively served their respective audiences over the years, this reorganization will significantly enhance the services they provide. With a single agency now addressing records matters, state and local government agencies will more readily be able to obtain much needed guidance and direction regarding a wide array of records-related issues.

The area of electronic records is an example where the consolidation of programs will prove valuable (See "Electronic Records Management and Preservation Initiatives" below). "With the growing use of electronic technologies such as email and databases to create records, it has become clear more attention needs to be directed to the management and preservation of electronic records," Dr. Anderson noted.

In addition to ensuring the effective creation, maintenance, use and disposition of government records, the records management program will continue to play an important role in the identification and preservation of records with historical value.

### Electronic Records Management and Preservation Initiatives

Two recent projects initiated by Records Management Services, one of the Department of History, Arts and Libraries (HAL) newest agencies, and the State Archives of Michigan, put HAL at the forefront of exploring challenges posed by electronic records.

As computers continue to transform the way government conducts business, the volume and types of electronic records created by government increases significantly. Traditional approaches and tools available to state employees for managing and preserving records are often insufficient for those in electronic formats.

In May 2000, work began on the Records Management Application (RMA) Pilot Project. RMA software provides a centralized repository for the storage and maintenance of and access to electronic records such as e-mail, word-processed documents, and digital images. All documents stored in the repository are organized in a structured filing system, and all are full-text searchable. The software ensures that records are protected from alteration and destruction during their retention period, and it destroys the records at the appropriate time, in accordance with legal requirements.

The second initiative focuses on the preservation of electronic records. The State Archives of Michigan is collaborating with the San Diego Supercomputer Center (SDSC) to develop and test preservation functional requirements for electronic records stored in an RMA. For more information about these projects, contact Caryn Wojcik at [wojcikc@michigan.gov](mailto:wojcikc@michigan.gov).



## New "Workplace Security" Brochure

The Consultation Education & Training Division is pleased to announce the creation of a new brochure, "Workplace Security Resource Guide." The brochure was developed in response to many requests for information received by the bureau after the September 11th World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks, and numerous anthrax scares.

Terrorism presents new workplace hazards-hazards that will be continually changing. MIOSHA developed this brochure not to create new workplace standards or requirements, but to provide information and guidance for Michigan employers.

To receive a copy of the brochure, contact 517.322.1809.

## TRW Automotive's Commercial Steering Systems in Portland Receives MIOSHA Rising Star Award

The Michigan Department of Consumer & Industry Services presented the Rising Star award to TRW Automotive Commercial Steering Systems' Portland facility at a special ceremony Jan. 8th to recognize the company for working toward excellence in workplace safety and health.

The Michigan Voluntary Protection Programs (MVPP) Rising Star award is given to companies that have a good safety and health program in place and have the desire and commitment to achieve the next and highest level of award, the Michigan Star award.

The CIS Bureau of Safety and Regulation (BSR) is responsible for the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Act (MIOSHA) program. MIOSHA established the MVPP program to recognize worksites that develop and implement outstanding safety and health management systems that go beyond MIOSHA standards.

"We are pleased to present the Rising Star award to TRW Automotive's Portland plant for their outstanding efforts to protect the safety and health of their workers," said BSR Director Doug Kalinowski. "TRW's Portland facility incorporates safety and health into all aspects of planning and production."

### SHORTCUT TO STANDARDS

Good news!! MIOSHA standards are now available on the web at: <http://www.michigan.gov/mioshastandards>. This new web site will make it much easier for our customers to access standards.

## OSHA Unveils Teen Worker Safety & Health Website

Keeping America's working teens safe and healthy while on the job is the goal of a new web site unveiled recently by Occupational Safety & Health Administration. Every year 70 U.S. teenagers die from work-related injuries and 77,000 more are injured seriously enough to require emergency medical treatment.

The teen safety and health site educates young workers, parents, employers and educators on workplace safety. The site offers educational resources such as fact sheets on workplace rights and responsibilities, hazards on the job, ways to prevent injuries, work hours, job restrictions, and more. It also links to states that have special web sites or initiatives designed for young workers, including Michigan.

The new teen safety and health site can be accessed from the Department of Labor's YouthRules! web site <http://www.youthrules.dol.gov/>, or through the OSHA web site A-Z index under "Youth" or under What's New at <http://www.osha.gov>.

Michigan's Youth Employment law information is located on the Bureau of Workers' & Unemployment Compensation website at:

<http://www.michigan.gov/bwuc/0,1607,7-161-15545---,00.html>



### Lowest Interest Rates Ever In Home Mortgage Program

Gov. Jennifer M. Granholm announced the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) has reduced the interest rates on its home mortgage loans to its lowest rate ever in an effort to make homeownership more affordable.

MSHDA will finance loans to modest-income homebuyers at an interest rate of 5.25 percent, with no discount points charged at loan closing, through February 12.

Also for the first time, homebuyers can fill out a pre-qualification application on MSHDA's website, <http://www.mshda.org>.

According to MSHDA Executive Director James L. Logue III, homebuyers with household incomes up to \$56,650 in metropolitan counties and \$44,000 in rural counties may qualify for the 30-year loans to buy new or existing homes. First-time homebuyers with incomes of 80 percent of county median or less (adjustable for family size) also may qualify for down payment assistance – up to \$10,000 for families with children and up to \$5,000 for families without children.

“We recognize that many homebuyers can afford mortgage payments but have limited resources for the down payment needed to buy a home,” Logue said. “By offering this assistance, we can help families who otherwise might be shut out of the market.”

Buyers who receive down payment assistance may purchase a home costing up to \$90,000, except where lower under federal law. For other buyers in MSHDA's program, existing homes may cost up to \$105,000 and new houses up to \$128,000, depending on the location of the property.

Compared to conventional interest rates of 6.0 percent, MSHDA financing will save the buyer on a \$70,000 loan approximately \$33 per month.

Available for certain loan types, homebuyers also may choose MSHDA's optional “step” loan, which features a reduced interest rate of 4.75 percent for the first three years, and then is increased to 5.75 percent for years 4-30. Borrowers will be qualified for the payment at the initial rate; the increase in payment at the fourth year is modest, according to Logue.

The program is primarily for first-time homebuyers, but many localities in Michigan are exempt from this federal restriction. MSHDA does not refinance existing mortgages or land contracts.

Because the federal government considers bond-financed mortgages to be subsidized, borrowers may be subject to federal “recapture tax” if they sell their home within nine years and realize a gain on the sale, Logue said.



### January Marks Beginning of Michigan Automated Prescription System

The Michigan Automated Prescription System program replaced the Official Prescription Program effective January 1, 2003. MAPS requires electronic reporting of all controlled substances in schedules 2 through 5 dispensed by pharmacies, physicians and veterinarians.

Controlled substance samples and those administered to patients are exempt from reporting. Also exempt are controlled substances dispensed by a physician in a health facility or agency licensed under article 17 for no more than a 48 hour supply.

CIS will not supply serialized prescription forms after Jan. 1, 2003 since physicians will no longer be required to use it. Reporting of controlled substances dispensed is required by the 15th of the month following the month the controlled substances are dispensed. Questions regarding the MAPS program should be directed to [mapsinfo@michigan.gov](mailto:mapsinfo@michigan.gov)





### OFIS Recovers More Than \$1.4 Million for Consumers

Commissioner Frank M. Fitzgerald announced the Michigan Office of Financial and Insurance Services (OFIS) assisted Michigan consumers in 964 mortgage lending complaints last year realizing a recovery of more than \$1.4 million on their behalf.

Fitzgerald added, "That doesn't include our efforts on behalf of consumers in the Household Finance Corporation settlement, which will yield more than \$15 million in restitution in March."

Further, OFIS initiated over 60 mortgage examinations and reviews for the year on behalf of consumers. More than a third of the examinations were in response to consumer allegations of fraudulent conduct by the mortgage company. Other reasons for examinations included financial concerns, unlicensed activities and advertising conflicts.



"In early 2001, through our mortgage examination efforts, OFIS examined Household Finance Corporation," said Fitzgerald. "Our examination found that Household was violating Michigan's consumer finance laws regarding mortgage loans. Rather than launching an independent investigation that would have been extremely costly and lengthy, OFIS joined the multi-state investigation in its early stages and was part of the core negotiating team for the states."

On December 16, Michigan and 48 other states and the District of Columbia formally entered consent decrees in courts throughout the country. Under the settlement, approximately 10,000 Michigan consumers will share \$15 million in total restitution.

### OFIS is Consumers Link to Insurance Resources and Support

Michigan citizens experienced increases in home and auto insurance rates as well as had concerns about the use of credit scoring in setting insurance rates in 2002. As part of Get Smart About Insurance Week (January 20 – 24, 2003), the Michigan Office of Financial and Insurance Services (OFIS) wants Michigan consumers to know that information about these insurance issues, and more, is available on the OFIS web site, located at: <http://www.michigan.gov/ofis> or by calling OFIS toll-free at 877-999-6442.

For example, some of the questions OFIS can assist consumers with include:

**My home insurance rates increased. Why did that happen and what can I do?** OFIS has information to help consumers understand the rates and an insurance guide that allows rate comparisons among insurance companies. The home insurance information, along with several other helpful insurance guides, is available at: <http://www.michigan.gov/ofis> - click on the homeowner's insurance icon at the bottom.

**Why does my insurance company want to look at my credit history?** In December 2002, OFIS completed a study that looked into the use of credit to set insurance rates. While the study found that using credit history to set insurance rates is legal, additional consumer protections are needed. The results of the credit study and the needed consumer protection measures are available directly at: [www.michigan.gov/cis/0,1607,7-154-10555\\_12902\\_15784---,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/cis/0,1607,7-154-10555_12902_15784---,00.html).

**What is long term care insurance?** OFIS offers 'A Shopper's Guide to Long Term Care Insurance,' on the Internet at: [http://www.michigan.gov/documents/cis\\_ofis\\_ltcshop\\_23739\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/cis_ofis_ltcshop_23739_7.pdf). The Michigan government web site also has a long term care portal at <http://www.michigan.gov/ltc>.

**I have a problem with my insurance and I want some help. What can I do?** If consumers cannot resolve their issues by contacting their insurance company and agent, they can contact OFIS for assistance. Call toll-free at 877-999-6442 to speak with an OFIS staff person who then can provide a complaint form, which can be either mailed or faxed to the consumer, and is also available on line directly at: [http://www.michigan.gov/documents/cis\\_ofis\\_comp\\_all\\_25074\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/cis_ofis_comp_all_25074_7.pdf).



CIS Salutes is devoted to employee accomplishments (on and off the job), letters of appreciation and staff changes. Please send CIS Salutes news to: **Lori Donlan - ldonla@michigan.gov**.

## Parry Earns Certified Health Physicist Title

**Don Parry** has completed the examination requirements of the American Board of Health Physics to become a Certified Health Physicist (CHP). Don has been with the Radiation Safety Section of the Bureau of Health Systems for 18 years, counting the time when the radiation control program was in the old Department of Public Health. He is one of only 17 CHP's in Michigan. Don's accomplishment shows great personal commitment to his profession and BHS is proud to have such a dedicated employee.

## CIS Employee Retires from U.S. Naval Reserve

Senior Safety Officer **Ken Pung** of the Bureau of Safety & Regulation General Industry Division retired from the U.S. Naval Reserve on Jan. 11. At a moving ceremony conducted at the Naval/Marine Corp reserve center, Ken was recognized for 20 years of service in the reserves. Also honored were Ken's wife, Linda, and their children for their sacrifices over the years when Ken was gone for training. **Chuck Lorish, Eva Hatt, Jim Gordon and Martha Yoder** were presented certificates thanking them for their support of the Navy Reserve program. At the end of the ceremony, Ken was "piped ashore" for the last time. When you see Ken, join

us in thanking him for his years of service to our country.

## BSR's Casual Friday Raises \$126 for Food Bank

The Bureau of Safety & Regulation has taken the concept of casual Friday to a new level by designating Dec. 20th as Blue Jean Day for its employees. The BSR Administration collected \$3 from everyone who dressed casually by wearing jeans. BSR raised a total of \$126.00 to benefit the Greater Lansing Food Bank.

## Consultation Education and Training Division Consultants Receiver Letters of Appreciation

Kudos to employees from the Bureau of Safety & Regulation's Consultation Education & Training Division, who received letters of appreciation. They are:

**Suellen Cook**, who received a letter of thanks from Washtenaw Community College complimenting her on a course she taught October 22, 2002 entitled: "MIOSHA: Safety Diligence - Accident Investigations and Job Safety Analysis." Raymond Grabel, Program Manager for Business & Professional Development Education Programs, at WCC wrote in part, "very nice

job, excellent ratings which is a tribute to your teaching skills."

CET Consultant **Jennifer Clark-Denson**, who recently helped Services Rendered Inc., Monroe, develop a safety and health program. The company trains and monitors developmentally disabled employees, and wanted to be sure all their supervisors were effectively trained in safety and health issues. Cheryl Evans, Human Resources Manager, sent a letter thanking Jennifer, stating, "Although I realize it is your job to meet with people and assist companies in making their safety programs better, you made it very pleasurable to learn and ask questions."

CET Consultant **Jenelle Thelen**, who conducted a noise evaluation for Lear Corporation's Fenton facility in November. Davis Yono, Assistant Human Resources Manager, wrote a letter of thanks, stating, "We appreciate the time you spent with us conducting a noise evaluation and educating us on hearing conservation."



### BSR Personnel Changes Announced

The Bureau of Safety & Regulation announces the following personnel changes:

**Patti Brace** has been selected to fill Sandy Hart's vacancy as this bureau's personnel liaison. Patti brings with her more than 20 years of state service and has most recently been Kalmin Smith's Management Assistant.

**Bill Shane** has accepted a position providing On-Site services to mid, northern, and the Upper Peninsula for the Consultation Education & Training Division as of Dec. 22. Bill has an associate's degree in environmental technology, four years experience as a General Industry Safety Inspector, and 26 years with Johnson Controls. During his tenure at Johnson Controls Corporation, Bill served as a Health & Safety trainer for the UAW.

**Anthony Neroni** has accepted a position with the CET Division, effective December 22, 2002. Tony previously was an Occupational Safety Inspector, Senior Safety Officer with General Industry. He has worked in General Industry since 1990. Prior to that he worked with MDOT as a Transportation Maintenance Worker. Tony has worked closely with Doug Kimmel and early retiree Jerry Medler, and will be assuming Jerry's northern Michigan territory.

**Sandy Koenigsknecht** has accepted the position of Division Secretary for the CET Division, effective January 6. Sandy has been the CET On-Site Secretary since 1998, and has a total of 16 years of secretarial experience. In June 2000, Sandy was awarded the BSR Galeeta Galusha-Antes Excellence In Service Award.

**Leanne Haeck** has accepted the position of Secretary to the two assistant chiefs in General Industry (GI). Leanne replaces Betty Peterson and has been with GI for four years. Leanne will be processing employee complaints, variances, and scheduling new safety officer training programs, in addition to various other assignments.

### CIS Purchasing & Grant Services Collects Gifts for St. Vincent Home



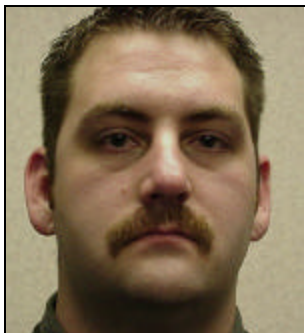
*The CIS Purchasing & Grant Services group collected gifts for the St. Vincent Home's Angel Tree program for Christmas. The response of the State workers on the Williams Building 3rd & 4th floors was wonderful. Thanks to their contributions, a wide variety of gifts were delivered to the St. Vincent Home on December 20th.*





## Osling Joins Office of Fire Safety Team

Office of Fire Safety announces **Geoffrey Osling** has joined the team as a new Fire Safety Inspector in the Farmington Region Office. His first day on the job was Jan. 6. Osling was previously with the Wixom Fire Department where he worked for 5 years. He is married to a social worker and enjoys outdoor activities.



**Geoffrey Osling**

## Book Fair Raises Money for Ele's Place

CIS Purchasing & Grant Services received a letter of appreciation from Ele's Place (at right) for a donation raised from the CIS Book Fair held in November. A donation of \$188.72, representing 5 percent of the total book sales, was earmarked for Ele's Place. Ele's Place is a nonprofit, community-based organization whose mission is to create awareness of and support for grieving children and their families. For more information about contributing to Ele's Place, please visit:  
<http://www.elsesplace.org/>



January 17, 2003

Karin Eirosius  
Purchasing and Grant Services  
State of Michigan Department of Consumer and Industry Services  
Finance & Administrative Services Bureau  
P.O.Box 30004  
Lansing, MI. 48909

Dear Karin:

On behalf of the families, Board of Directors and staff of Ele's Place, we want to thank you for designating Ele's Place as the beneficiary of your event proceeds of \$188.72.

Each week, Ele's Place provides caring services for over 160 children plus their family members. While length of participation averages nine months, each family may come to Ele's Place for as long as they feel it is beneficial to them. In addition to support groups, Ele's Place educates mental health professionals, health care providers, educators and the community at large about children's grief issues and the services we provide.

In accordance with directives from the Internal Revenue Service, this letter also serves as a receipt for your gift and assurance that Ele's Place has not provided any goods or services which would affect the tax deductibility of your gift.

If you would like to learn more about Ele's Place and the needs of the children we serve, please call us at (517) 482-1315. Again, thank you for caring about the children in the mid-Michigan area, and for selecting Ele's Place as the beneficiary of your event.

Sincerely,

*Charles J. McDonald*

Charles J. McDonald  
President

*Laurie Strauss Baumer*

Laurie Strauss Baumer  
Executive Director

*Lori Bock*

Lori Bock  
Director of Development

*Thanks so much for your support!*

*Thank you for holding this fundraiser to*

A healing center for grieving children

600 W. ST. JOSEPH ST., SUITE 1-G, LANSING, MI 48933  
(517) 482-1315 FAX (517) 482-6608





## \$20 Million Approved for Low-Income and Energy Efficiency Grants

The Michigan Public Service Commission approved a fourth round of grants, totaling \$20 million from the Low-Income and Energy Efficiency Fund.

The Customer Choice and Electricity Reliability Act of 2000 authorized the creation of a low-income and energy efficiency fund, administered by the Commission. The purpose of the fund is to provide shut-off and other protection for low-income customers and to promote energy efficiency by all customer classes. The fund results from securitization savings that exceeded the amount needed to achieve a 5 percent rate reduction for residential and business customers.

The Commission received 10 proposals with requests totaling more than \$39 million. In awarding these grants, the Commission gave a preference to organizations with a proven record in distributing energy assistance to low-income residents, an existing administrative structure to handle additional distribution activities, an ability to coordinate the provision of assistance with other service providers, and a plan to serve multiple counties or populations of at least 500,000 people. The order approves the following grants:

- **Family Independence Agency (FIA)** - \$12 million to provide supplemental payments to households receiving the Home Heating Credit and \$1.5 million to expand the State Emergency Fund in cooperation with community action agencies;
- **Salvation Army** - \$3 million to serve households statewide ineligible for assistance from FIA or for whom such assistance is insufficient or not available;
- **MCAAA** - \$2 million in a direct grant for low-income energy assistance;
- **THAW** - \$1.5 million for the THAW Safety Net Program.

The order follows three previous Commission orders approving grants from the Fund. On February 21, 2002, the Commission issued an order approving the first round of grants totaling \$27.4 million to immediately address the needs of low-income customers during the heating season. On July 23, 2002, the Commission issued an order approving the second round of grants totaling \$12.2 million to develop or improve the quality or application of energy efficient technologies. On August 20 and September 16, 2002, the Commission awarded more than \$5 million for low-income energy efficiency grants.

## Michigan Citizens Can Get Assistance with Home Heating Bills

Heating bills may be higher this winter because of expected colder weather and increased energy usage. Therefore, it is extremely important to know that help with winter heating bills is available to senior citizens and low-income customers. The Michigan Public Service Commission encourages these customers to take advantage of home heating help programs.

A variety of programs are available to assist customers in need. Customers facing heating bills that they are unable to pay should first contact their utility company or energy supplier and explain their situation **before receiving a shut-off notice**. Some programs and the appropriate contacts are:

**Winter Protection Plan:** Contact your natural gas or electric utility company or alternative supplier.

**Earned Income Credit:** U.S. Department of Treasury, Internal Revenue Service <http://www.irs.gov>.

**Home Heating Credit:** Michigan Department of Treasury <http://www.michigan.gov/treasury>.

**State Emergency Relief Program:** Call your local Family Independence Agency.

**Programs to Reduce Energy Use:** Local Community Action Agencies may help with caulking and insulation if specific low-income guidelines are met. The MPSC also has a brochure: "Energy Savers - Tips on Saving Energy & Money at Home" at <http://www.michigan.gov/mpsc> or calling 1-800-292-9555.

For information about these programs, visit:

<http://www.cis.state.mi.us/mpsc/execsec/alerts/homeheat.pdf>



### Plawecki Named Acting BW&UC Director

BW&UC Deputy Director David A. Plawecki has been named acting director of the Bureau of Workers' & Unemployment Compensation.

Plawecki, who joined the Michigan Employment Security Commission (MESC) in 1989, had been responsible for administering the Bureau's unemployment insurance benefit policy and technical support programs as well as its internal and external communications efforts.

Prior to joining the Bureau, Plawecki was the district administrator for a Congressional office. He was also the former chief executive assistant to the first Wayne County Executive and for 12 years served in the Michigan Senate in leadership posts as Majority Floor Leader and Chair of the Labor Committee. As a Senator, he led development of the state's experience-rated UI tax system, self-insurance for Worker's Compensation, MIOSHA, as well as Michigan's Open Meetings, Freedom of Information and Right-to-Know Acts.



**DAVID A. PLawecki**

### New Remote Initial Claims Allow Customers to "Take Cuts In Line"

Work on converting the State's unemployment insurance system to remote access continues to move forward. Ongoing testing and a launch of a limited Internet Filed Claims (IFC) System has proved to be successful. As of Jan. 29, 2003, more than 3,800 claims have been processed through the Internet at <http://www.michigan.gov/bwuc>. This first phase of IFC allows only customers with new claims and meeting certain conditions to file claims via the Internet. Phase two, which was announced on Jan. 28th, expands the system to handle customers with additional claims and reopened claims.

Testing of Telephone Filed Claims (TFC) is also taking place. The interactive voice response system is being gradually rolled out. Currently the system is only open to customers in northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula. Expansion of the system is expected in the early February.

### Federal Extended Benefits Extended for Jobless Workers

About 52,000 jobless workers in Michigan were able to resume their Temporary Extended Unemployment Compensation (TEUC) benefits, which had ended December 28th. In early January, Congress and the President approved the continuation of the program, which provided up to 13 weeks of additional unemployment benefits for those who exhaust their regular state benefits. Those customers who had a balance of benefits remaining when the program ended will be able receive their remaining weeks of benefits, while those customers newly exhausting their state benefits through May 31, 2003 will receive 13 additional weeks through the federal program. All TEUC payments will end by August 30, 2003.

Eligibility requirements for those claiming TEUC are exactly the same as those for the regular state unemployment insurance (UI) program. Workers must be unemployed and able to work, be available for work and be actively seeking work. TEUC claimants must also be registered for work with their local Michigan Works! Agency, unless the requirement is waived, and they may need to re-register if their registration is a year or older.

Customers with remaining weeks were notified by mail and provided with instructions on how to resume their benefits. Those customers newly eligible for TEUC will be notified with instructions when they near the end of their regular state benefits.



## Workers' Comp Board of Magistrates

### Applicants Sought for Workers' Compensation Board of Magistrates

The CIS Qualifications Advisory Committee is seeking qualified applicants for positions on the Workers' Compensation Board of Magistrates.

An applicant must be a member in good standing of the State Bar of Michigan and have five years experience as an attorney in the field of workers' compensation or successfully complete a written examination. The examination will be offered March 7, 2003, in Lansing. Those interested in taking the exam must apply by February 28, 2003.

To meet the five-year requirement, an applicant must document five years of experience to the Qualifications Advisory Committee in one of the following areas:

- \* A significant portion of personal practice in active workers' compensation trial practice representing claimants or employers.
- \* A significant portion of personal practice in active workers' compensation appellate practice representing claimants or employers.
- \* Service as a member of the former Workers' Compensation Appeal Board or the Workers' Compensation Appellate Commission.

Applicants for the Board of Magistrates examination will be tested on knowledge of the Workers' Disability Compensation Act, Michigan Rules of Evidence, fact-finding skills and knowledge of human anatomy and physiology. Those who previously passed the exam do not have to retake it.

The Qualifications Advisory Committee will use exam results to expand the pool of qualified applicants. Attorneys who successfully complete the exam or meet the five years' experience requirement will be interviewed by the Qualifications Advisory Committee to determine their suitability for the position, especially with regard to their objectivity.

The committee will make recommendations to the Governor from the applicant pool, including those who previously passed the exam and interview process, for appointment to the positions. Previous applicants who have not been interviewed recently are advised to re-apply at this time.

Interested parties must send a résumé to: Qualifications Advisory Committee, ATTN: Susan Bickel, Michigan Department of Consumer & Industry Services, P.O. Box 30016, Lansing, MI 48909. Please include a cover letter clearly stating whether you are applying to take the examination or meet the experience requirement.



## Energy Office

### \$5,000 Energy Grants Awarded to GVSU and Calhoun Conservation District

The CIS Energy Office has awarded \$5,000 grants to Grand Valley State University and Calhoun Conservation District through the Michigan Biomass Energy Program (<http://michiganbioenergy.org>).

The Annis Water Resources Institute at Grand Valley State University's Muskegon campus will demonstrate the environmental benefits of using biodiesel fuel using their research vessel, the W. G. Jackson. The Jackson sails twice daily during the academic year and provides a floating laboratory and classroom for students and researchers. The vessel also tours Lake Michigan ports during the summer months. Michigan has tremendous potential for research as the state has over 1 million registered watercraft (the largest in the nation).

The Calhoun Conservation District grant will be used to educate Michigan teachers, students and farmers about biomass energy. Sixty percent of the land in Calhoun County is farmland, which provides the area with a tremendous potential for biomass energy production and use.